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ABSTRACT

The six papers in this set of symposium materials all deal with the development and measurement of self-concept in various groups of students. The first paper (by Douglas Muller) addresses the lack of well-defined procedures for assessing self-concept and suggests that such a measure should be based on standardized procedures such as the Self-Descriptive Inventory. In the second paper (by Carlos R. Velasco-Barraza), the differences between self-concepts of school children in Chile, Mexico, and the United States are compared. Achievement levels of students of equal intellectual abilities but differing self-concepts are compared in the third paper (by Glenda Foster and Sharon Wooden), while the fourth paper (by Sonya I. Smith and Sharon Wooden) describes the relationship between a student's school self-concept and his/her behavioral adjustment at school. The self-concept of cognitively impaired students and the stability in sixth graders are examined in the final two papers (by Norma Robinson and by Donald Frazier). (JAC)

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[SELF-CONCEPT:
Symposium Papers from New Mexico State University]

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Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association, Las Cruces, NM, October 15-17, 1980.

PAPERS PRESENTED

The Measurement of Self-Concept
by Douglas Muller

Development of Self-Concept in Children form Chile, Mexico and the United States
by Carlos R. Velasco-Barraza

Achievement of Students with High and Low Self-Concepts
by Glenda Foster and Sharon Wooden

Relationship Between School Self-Concept and Inappropriate School Behavior
by Sonya I. Smith and Sharon L. Wooden

Self-Concepts of Special Education Students
by Mickey Klein

Stability of Self-Concept and Academic Achievement in Sixth Graders
by Norma Robinson and Donald Frazier

The Measurement of Self-Concept

by

Douglas Muller

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The construct of self-concept has long been regarded as a significant variable affecting the classroom performance of the student. While a tremendous amount of speculative literature has been generated in this area, the bulk of this speculation has not been derived from systematic, empirical observation, nor has it been empirically verified. This situation exists in spite of a large number of empirical studies concerned with the relationships between various measures of self-concept and other school related variables. By in large these research efforts can be characterized as conceptually unconnected, and methodologically idiosyncratic. But perhaps even more distressing is the virtual absence of rigorous, programmatic experimentation in this area.

Perhaps the single most important contributing factor to this state of affairs is the illusive nature of the conceptualization itself. Self-concept is typically defined in non-operational, perceptual or phenomenological terms and is regarded as fundamentally unobservable or at best only indirectly inferred from those behaviors it is assumed to influence. Conceptualizations of this type have rather vaguely or ambiguously indicated the measurement operations to be applied to the construct and frequently those measurement operations have not been distinctly independent of the behavioral manifestations self-concept is used to explain. As a consequence, well defined proceudres for assessing self-concept have not been established. This in turn, has resulted in relatively little use of common instrumentation in research. The instrumentation which has been used is largely inadequately standardized, and possesses technical qualities (e.g. reliability, validity)

which are far below the standards operating in other areas of educational research. The obvious difficulties of interpreting research which utilizes measures of questionable reliability and validity are compounded by the tendency of researchers to create new instruments also of untested reliability and validity rather than rely upon an instrument used in previous research.

I would like to discuss our approach to this problem. We have begun with an alternative conceptualization of self-concept which we feel is more useful in the development of instrumentation and the generation of programmatic research. Rather than define self-concept as the individual's perceptions of self, we have defined it as the individual's repertoire of self-descriptive behaviors, both overt and covert (Muller, 1978). In line with this definition, self-esteem was defined as the subset of self-descriptions which indicate valuation of self or a self-described trait or characteristic.

By defining self-concept as the repertoire of self-descriptive behavior, the general nature of the measurement operations are rather clearly indicated; self-descriptive acts are observed. More precisely, a sample of self-descriptive behaviors is taken and from that sample, inferences about the individual's repertoire of self-descriptions are made. As with other measures of psychological constructs, we feel that samples of self-descriptive behaviors should be taken using a standardized procedure and in a way which is likely to provide a useful estimate of self-concept.

Interestingly, researchers who have adopted a perceptual definition of self-concept have also relied upon self-description as the basis for self-concept assessment. Thus, from a measurement perspective, perceptual and self-descriptive conceptualizations appear to be operationally equivalent.

However, this is not to imply that the two conceptualizations indicate the same instructional strategies or hypothesize the same relationships between self-concept and classroom behavior.

The researcher's first task, once the self-descriptive behavior has been observed, is its quantification. Typically researchers have assigned a number value to the self-description which indicates its degree of positiveness; positiveness usually reflecting the extent to which the self-description is consistent with the ideal of the surrounding society.

Factor analytic studies of self-descriptive behaviors quantified in terms of positiveness indicate that self-descriptions can be organized into statistically independent factors or areas (Piers and Harris, 1964; Muller and Leonetti, 1974, Larned, 1978). Further more, these statistically independent factors represent logically identifiable clusters. This suggests that self-concept relative to a specific characteristic of self is likely to be unrelated to self-concept relative to another distinctly different characteristic. For example, self-concept of peer relations is likely to be independent of acacemic success self-concept.

Larned and Muller (1979) and Velasco-Barraza (1979) report that the development of self-concept (quantified in terms of positiveness) follows different patterns in each of four areas. Larned and Muller (1978) and Mintz and Muller (1977) report that factor specific measures of self-concept reflective of general academic success were more likely to correlate with academic achievement than were either globally oriented self-concept measures or factor specific measures not reflective of school success. Chambliss, Muller, Hulnick and Wood (1978) found essentially the same phenomenon

relative to peer relations. They reported that peer relations self-concept was more likely to correlate with peer group popularity than were area specific self-measures not reflective of peer relations. Finally, Lane and Muller (1977) reported that experimentally raising the positiveness of academic self-concept did not affect the positiveness of self-concept in non-academic areas. Thus, the research indicates that self-concept, when quantified in terms of positiveness, should be measured relative to specific areas rather than globally.

I would suggest, however, that positiveness of self-concept should not be regarded as the critical characteristic of a functional self-concept. A primary function of self-concept is as an information base in making certain decisions. In order to function in this capactiy, self-concept must accurately reflect relevant characteristics of the individual. For example, when the high school student is faced with the task of selecting a math course, he should consider characteristics of self which relate to success in each of the available math courses. If he has difficulty with math, doesn't consistently study his math and has not had geometry, obviously he should not select a math course in advanced calculus. Thus, it is argued that educators should focus on the task of helping the student develop a realistic or accurate self-concept rather than an unrealistic, overly positive self-concept. However, in an earlier paper I pointed out that in doing this, the accurate self-concept must be self-accepting in tone and must be accompanied by a generally positive self-esteem (Muller, 1978).

Thus, from our perspective, the measurement of accuracy of self-concept is much more important than is the measurement of simple positiveness.

The problems of measuring accuracy appear to be much more formidable than the problems of measuring positiveness. Logically the assessment of accuracy requires that self-concept be measured in reference to specific characteristics of self. For example, the accuracy of the self-description, "I am the tallest person in my room" can be assessed because it has a specific referent. However, the accuracy of the self-description, "I am a very nice person" probably cannot be meaningfully assessed. Thus, the assessment of the accuracy of self-concept is only possible with samples of self-descriptive behaviors which are reflective of observable self-characteristics. This necessity directly implies an area specific approach to self-concept measurement.

Researchers have attemtped to quantify the accuracy of self-concept in several ways. The most obvious approach is to ask a knowledgeable judge(s) to rate the degree of accuracy reflected in the self-description. For example, ask the teacher to evaluate the accuracy of the student's self-descriptions relative to social relationships. This approach requires the participation of the judge as well as the subject and assumes that the judge, usually an untrained observer, can assess the accuracy of the self-description.

Another approach to assessing accuracy was used by Chambliss, Muller, Hulnick and Wood (1978). They defined those students with highly positive self-concepts of peer relations and high popularity, and those students with low peer relations self-concepts and low popularity as having accurate peer relations self-concepts. Students who were high in self-concept but low in popularity or low in self-concept but high in popularity were

regarded as having inaccurate peer relations self-concepts. Mayhall (1978) used the same technique with reading self-concept. In one sense this technique is superior to the first in that it eliminates the need for a judge and assesses accuracy in terms of the relationship between self-description and a referent measure of the characteristic in question.

A third approach was suggested by Mintz and Muller (1977). They proposed that for a group, the correlation coefficient between positiveness of self-concept and a direct measure of the referent characteristic could be used as an index of relative accuracy of self-concept for the group as a whole. For example, if most members of a group had accurate academic self-concepts, then the correlation between measures of academic self-concept and achievement would be relatively high. If the majority of members in the group had inaccurate academic self-concepts, the correlation would be low.

It would seem that the notion suggested by Mintz and Muller (1977) could be extended to the measurement of relative accuracy of self-concept for the individual within the group. This procedure would involve using an area specific self-concept score to predict a direct measure of that characteristic and then comparing the predicted score with the actual score. For example, the individuals academic success self-concept could be used to arrive at a prediction of his achievement test score. The discrepancy between the predicted achievement score and the actual achievement score could be used as a measure of relative accuracy of self-concept for that individual. Individuals with small discrepancies (residuals) would have high relative accuracy, those with large discrepancies (residuals) would

have low relative accuracy. This procedure would provide a measure of relative rather than absolute accuracy. This distinction becomes apparent if one considers that if the academic self-concept score of each member of a group was incremented by a fixed constant, the correlation between self-concept and achievement would be unaffected (relative accuracy) but the absolute accuracy of the scores would be directly altered. Thus, it must be recognized that this procedure would measure accuracy relative to a group and it is conceivable that within a group an individual could have very high absolute accuracy but low relative accuracy.

Thus, it would appear that a measure of self-concept should be based on standardized procedures, should be area specific in nature, should be capable of yielding information relative to self-concept and self-esteem, should be useful in assessing not only positiveness but also accuracy and should be as reliable and valid as other measures of psychological constructs. Self-concept can function as a useful construct for the educator only to the extent that it is possible to construct a measure with these qualities. We feel that the Self-Descriptive Inventory (Muller, Larned and Leonetti, 1978) demonstrates that such goals are achievable.

The Self-Descriptive Inventory is a group test designed to measure the child's self-concept, self-esteem and self-ideal relevant to four aspects of his school life: physical maturity, peer relations, academic success and school adaptiveness. The test is composed of a series of illustrations. Each page of the test contains two identical illustrations separated by sad and happy faces. In each illustration, one or more children are portrayed in a role consistent with the social ideal and one or more in a role

inconsistent with the social ideal. The children are read a brief story about the picture and each is asked to indicate the person in the top picture who he thinks he is most like; then to indicate the face that tells how he feels about the way he is in the top picture; and finally to indicate the person in the bottom picture who is most like the way he would like to try to be. The top picture measures self-concept; the middle faces, self-esteem; and the bottom picture, self-ideal.

The Self-Descriptive Inventory contains 26 pages. The items on the first two pages are unscored and are used to familiarize students with the testing procedures. Of the remaining 24 pages, six contain physical maturity items, six peer relations items, six academic success items, and six school adaptiveness items. Each of the test items has an easily understood singular theme. The instructions read to the student direct his attention to the critical elements of the theme being portrayed in the illustration.

In order to insure that the child's performance on this test is not affected by his reading ability, all instructions are read to the student by the test administrator. When a student does not have a functional command of English, the instructions can be rephrased or translated into the child's native language. The illustrations of the SDI are constructed to minimize distracting or irrelevant racial, sexual or personal appearance characteristics.

The items of the Self-Descriptive Inventory are designed to be relevant across a wide range of school settings, grade levels and cultural backgrounds.

Each physical maturity self-concept and self-ideal item depicts two or more students varing in size. The verbal description provided with the illustration indicates that the students are in the same grade and the taller

children look older, larger or stronger. Each peer acceptance self-concept and self-ideal item contains two groups of children; a relatively larger group of two to six and a relatively smaller group of one or two. Children in the larger group are described as having many friends and children in the smaller group as having only a few friends or as being "left out." Academic success self-concept and self-ideal items depict one or more children being relatively successful in their academic work and one or more being relatively unsuccessful. School adaptiveness items portray one or more students conforming to standard behavioral expectations (doing assigned work, being appropriately quiet, etc.) and one or more not conforming to those expectations. A more complete description of each of the areas measured by the SDI is presented in Table 1.

Each of the test items is scored in terms of positiveness. For self-concept and self-ideal, a positive item score indicates that the child selected the response which is in agreement with the generally expressed social ideal. That is, he selected the child who was: more physically mature, more widely accepted by his peers, more academically successful or more adapted to the school setting. A positively scored self-esteem item indicates that the child described himself as happy.

The test yields a self-concept score, self-esteem score and self-ideal score for each of the four areas tested. The self-concept and self-ideal scores indicate the numbers of times the student selected the more positive response for items in each of the tested areas. The self-esteem scores indicate the numbers of times the student indicated he was happy with himself given his self-description.

TABLE 1

Description of the Areas of Self-Concept, Self-Esteem and Self-Ideal Assessed by the Self-Descriptive Inventory

PHYSICAL MATURITY: The relative maturity of the child within his classroom group. A more physically mature child in this test is one who looks older, is taller, or is stronger than his classmates.

PEER RELATIONS: The child's acceptance or rejection by his peer group. The accepted child is portrayed as being included in a variety of group activities or as having many friends. The rejected child is portrayed as being rejected, left-out or as not having many friends. The rejected child is never portrayed as a child who prefers to play alone.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS: The child's relative success at academics within his classroom group. The more successful child is portrayed as a more able learner, one who knows the answers to teacher questions, doesn't need special help from the teacher, and makes relatively few mistakes on his school work.

SCHOOL ADAPTIVENESS: The child's ability to exhibit those behaviors typically expected within the classroom environment. The school adaptive child is the student who does his work during the designated time, works quietly when expected to and does not distract others inappropriately.

Larned (1977) examined the reliability and validity of an early version of the Self-Descriptive Inventory. That version of the test measured only self-concept and self-esteem. In assessing validity, he found that the judgements of experts regarding what each of the items on the test was measuring, were consistent with the theoretical structure of the test. He also found the factor analytic structure of the test was largely consistent with the theoretical structure. The SDI was found to correlate well with the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale (1969). Larned found that there was a positive correlation between the frequency of occurrence of self-descriptive phrases occurring in the classroom writings of children and their performance on the SDI. Finally, he observed systematic and stable developmental patterns on each of the self-measures of the SDI.

In assessing reliability, Larned used split-half, Kuder-Richardson and test-retest procedures. His results indicated that reliability coefficients above .70 could easily be achieved regardless of grade level.

Larned's results lead us to be optimistic regarding the further refinement of the SDI. We felt that reliabilities could be raised to the .80's and eventaully .90's and that factor analytic structure could be made completely congruent with theoretical structure.

As a result of Larned's work, the SDI was revised to its present form and its technical qualities reassessed. Test-retest reliability coefficients are presented in Table 2. These results indicate that with the present test, the self-concept measures are more reliable than either the self-esteem or self-ideal. However, overall reliabilities are lower than anticipated. We suspect several reasons for this. First, the way response alternatives

were labeled on the test may have created some confusion within the students. Certain of the self-concept and self-ideal items on the test portray several people in positive roles and several in negative roles. Each person in the illustration is labeled with a different letter. The fact that each of the people has a different label may imply that a discrimination between people in the same role is to be made. This may serve to confuse the student taking the test. We also suspect that the answer sheet itself might be lowering reliability. We have been using a universal, machine scoreable answer sheet. Students seem to become confused and lose their places while taking the test. For self-esteem, the response alternatives, happy or sad, may be too dicotomous. A third alternative, neither happy nor sad, may be in order.

Finally, it is possible that self-concepts of children are not clearly defined and thus, the student cannot consistently respond to items on the test. To illustrate, reliability of a calculus test is low when the test is taken by people who know very little about calculus. This last possibility is certainly consistent with the conceptualization of self-concept as the individual's repertoire of self-descriptive behaviors.

The factor structure of the SDI, however, was almost perfectly consistent with the theoretical structure. One item from the academic success area sometimes loaded on the school adaptiveness factor.

Considering the above, an experimental revision of the test has been constructed and is being assessed.

TABLE 2

Test-Retest Correlation Coefficients

for the Self-Descriptive Inventory

	physical maturity	peer relations	academic success	school adaptiveness
self-concept	.88	.82	.82	.84
self-esteem	.76	.79	.74	.59
self-ideal	.79	.54	.74	.76

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Development of Self-Concept in Children from Chile, Mexico and the United States

by

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Development of Self-Concept in Children from Chile, Mexico, and the United States

The child's self-concept, self-esteem and self-ideal are thought to develop as a result of the interaction between child and environment. Consequently, the self-concepts of children from different educational and cultural environments would be expected to show somewhat different developmental patterns. This study examines the extent to which such differences occur between groups of school children in the countries of Chile, Mexico, and the United States.

Larned and Muller (1979), examining the development of self-concept and self-esteem on each of the four school related factors identified by Larned (1978), reported that for United States children, positiveness of physical maturity and peer relations self-concept and self-esteem remained relatively stable across grades one through nine while academic success and school adaptiveness self-concept and self-esteem declined.

The study reported here comparatively examines the development of positiveness of self-concept, -esteem, and -ideal in these four school related areas for children from Chile, Mexico, and the United States. Of particular interest is the generality of the observed decline in the positiveness of academic success and school adaptiveness self-concept and self-esteem.

Method

Physical maturity, peer relations, academic success and school adaptiveness self-concept (SC), self-esteem (SE), and self-ideal (SI) were measured in second, fourth, sixth, and eighth graders living in Chile, Mexico, and the United States.

Within each country, approximately 50 boys and 50 girls were tested at each of the four grade levels. Approximately half of the students at each grade were drawn from rural schools and half from urban schools. The exact numbers of students by sex, grade and location of school can be found in Table 1.

The schools within each country were selected with the guidance of an education specialist from the faculty of a university serving the region. The schools utilized were judged to be typical of schools in the region. All schools were public and were attended by students from families in the surrounding region. Velasco-Barraza (1979) presents a more detailed description of the schools, students, and their communities.

The Self-Descriptive Inventory (Muller, Larned, & Leonetti, 1979), is a revised form of the test used by Larned (1978) and Larned and Muller (1979). The revision included the addition of self-ideal items to the earlier test and very minor changes in instructions. Factor analysis of scores obtained with the revised test confirmed the factor structure reported by Larned (1978).

The Self-Descriptive Inventory (SDI) is a group test designed to measure self-concept (SC), self-esteem (SE), and self-ideal (SI) in

four independent school related areas: physical maturity, peer relations, academic success, and school adaptiveness.

The Spanish translation of the test manual was verified for accuracy by bilingual (Spanish/English) Chilean, Uruguayan, and Venezuelan language teachers; and for appropriateness for the children being tested, by the participating Mexican and Chilean teachers (Velasco-Barraza, 1979).

Results and Discussion

Mean SC, SE, and SI scores by grade and nationality are presented in Table 1. Each of the 12 self-measures was subjected to a nationality by grade analysis of variance. These analyses are also summarized in Table 1. A Newman-Keuls analysis was then used to test differences between cell means.

The results of these analyses indicated that for all three national groups, mean physical maturity SC remained virtually constant across grades and even though there was a significant nationality main effect, its magnitude was small. For physical maturity SE, mean positiveness declined slightly for Mexican students but stayed relatively constant for Chilean and US students. Taken together, the physical maturity SC and SE results suggest commonality of developmental patterns across the national groups rather than divergence. The results for physical maturity self-ideal, however, suggest modest differences in developmental patterns across nationality groups. Mean SI remained stable across grades for US students, rose for Chilean and fluctuated for

TABLE 1

Means and Standard Deviations of Self-Concept, Self-Esteem and Self-Ideal Scores for Chilean, Mexican and United States Children in Grades Two, Four, Six and Eight

Area	Self-Measure		Chilean 2	Chilean 4	Chilean 6	Chilean 8	Mexican 2	Mexican 4	Mexican 6	Mexican 8	U.S. 2	U.S. 4	U.S. 6	U.S. 8	Significant F-ratios: Nation	Grade	NxG
Physical Maturity	concept	M	2.5	2.2	2.1	2.8	2.8	2.4	1.9	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.3	3.2	10.37		
			1.8	1.7	1.6	1.5	1.9	2.0	1.8	2.0	2.0	1.7	2.0	1.7			
	esteem	M	4.6	5.1	4.7	4.7	5.2	4.7	5.1	4.3	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.6			
			1.5	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.7	1.4	2.1	1.6	1.5	1.6	1.6			3.29
	ideal	M	3.2	3.2	3.7	4.2	3.5	4.3	3.6	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.3	4.4	7.32	17.98	4.18
			1.6	1.7	1.4	1.3	1.8	1.5	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.4			
Peer Relations	concept	M	4.3	3.9	4.5	4.6	5.0	4.2	4.9	4.9	3.5	4.1	4.5	4.5	8.08	13.01	3.60
			1.4	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.4	2.0	1.5	1.6	1.9	1.8	2.0	1.8			
	esteem	M	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.8	5.2	4.6	5.0	4.7	4.1	4.6	4.6	4.7		6.15	2.93
			1.5	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.8	1.4	1.8	1.9	1.6	1.7	1.6			
	ideal	M	4.4	5.0	5.3	5.3	5.1	5.4	5.6	5.5	4.7	5.2	5.5	5.4	23.43	10.76	
			1.4	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.1	0.9	1.2	1.5	1.1	0.9	1.0			
Academic Success	concept	M	4.4	4.3	3.9	2.5	3.4	3.1	2.2	2.2	4.0	3.2	2.0	2.1	74.61	59.17	7.01
			1.2	1.4	1.7	1.8	1.1	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.8			
	esteem	M	4.8	4.8	4.4	3.3	5.2	4.7	3.8	3.5	4.5	4.0	3.2	3.3	45.34	15.84	3.08
			1.5	1.3	1.7	1.8	1.3	1.6	1.8	1.7	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0			
	ideal	M	4.1	5.0	5.3	5.3	3.5	4.0	3.8	4.3	4.8	5.3	5.5	5.4	43.41	176.51	4.62
			1.5	1.1	1.0	0.7	1.3	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.4	0.9	0.8	0.8			
School Adaptiveness	concept	M	5.4	5.3	4.4	3.5	5.2	5.0	4.4	3.7	5.3	4.4	3.7	3.1	71.67	11.46	
			1.2	1.2	1.6	2.1	1.3	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.2	1.8	2.2	2.1			
	esteem	M	4.8	5.2	4.7	4.3	5.2	5.0	4.9	4.4	5.2	4.6	4.3	4.2	14.90	3.86	
			1.6	1.3	1.5	1.7	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.9	1.3	1.4	1.8	1.8			
	ideal	M	4.8	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.1	5.6	5.5	5.5	5.2	5.3	5.3	5.1	9.14	3.03	
			1.7	1.1	0.9	0.9	1.3	1.0	0.8	0.9	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.3			
			Numbers of Children												Degrees of Freedom		
Rural	Boys		25	24	24	26	29	22	21	18	22	18	25	45	2/1252	3/1252	6/1252
	Girls		24	24	26	24	25	37	33	27	28	23	22	39			
Urban	Boys		25	24	25	25	23	22	27	27	27	25	33	29			
	Girls		25	25	25	25	26	34	29	22	22	24	24	42			

Mexican. While mean differences between nationality groups were detected in the earlier grades, by eighth, those differences were no longer apparent. The relatively high mean SE for all groups and the consistent tendency for SI to be moderately more positive than SC is suggestive of good adjustment in the physical maturity area.

For peer relations SC, moderate differences appeared in the developmental patterns of the three national groups. Chilean children exhibited relatively stable mean SC across grades; Mexican children, a fluctuating pattern and US children, a gradual increase in positiveness. By grade eight, mean differences between national groups were quite small. Mean peer relations SE remained relatively high and constant across grades for each of the national groups. Mexican and US students showed an initial difference but by grade eight, the means of the three groups were virtually identical. Initially, mean peer relations SI was slightly lower for Chilean children than for Mexican and US, but again by grade eight differences between groups were virtually non-existent. As in the physical maturity area, the moderate discrepancy between SC and SI and the high SE suggests good adjustment in peer relations.

Perhaps the most striking findings of this research are in the area of academic success. Self-concept and SE show dramatic declines in each of the three national groups. For the Chilean children, these declines were most pronounced between grades six and eight. Prior to that, mean SC and SE were relatively stable. For Mexican and US students, the decline occurred between grades two and six. By grade

eight, the academic success SC and SE means of the three groups were quite similar. Mean academic success SI showed an increase across grades for each of the three national groups. The tendency of the Mexican students to exhibit noticably lower mean self-ideals than the Chilean or US students is fascinating and represents the largest and most consistent national differences reported in this study. While the differences in SI between Chilean and US children decrease and practically disappear by grade eight, the differences between Mexican and Chilean or US students remain relatively constant. The implications of this finding are not clear. The impact of the positiveness of SI on school performance is yet to be empirically ascertained. However, for all three national groups, the declining SC, the increasing discrepency between SC and SI, and the declining SE could represent a significant impediment to learning in the higher grades. While it has been conclusively demonstrated that SC does in fact affect the learning of children in the school environment, there is sufficient experimental evidence to warrent apprehension (Sharp & Muller, 1978).

School adaptiveness SC and SE tended to decline across grades for each of the national groups while SI remained stable (Mexican, US) or increased slightly (Chilean). There were relatively few significant mean differences between the national groups at any of the grade levels and there were no differences at the eighth grade level. The declines in SC and SE and the increases in discrepencies between SC and SI were not as dramatic as for academic success.

The results of this research essentially parallel the results of Larned and Muller (1979) in that physical maturity and peer relations SC and SI remained relatively stable across grades while academic success and school adaptiveness SC and SE declined.

The results of this study indicate minor differences in the developmental patterns of school related SC, SE, and SI for children in Chile, Mexico and the US. One of the most interesting phenomena observed in this study was the tendency for differences between national groups to disappear by eighth grade. This phenomenon probably reflects the existence of many common elements in the schooling processes of the three nations. The only substantial, perservering difference between national groups occurred in the area of academic success SI, with Mexican children showing a consistently lower SI than either Chilean or US children. Popular literature on the role of self-ideal in learning and performance makes it both tempting and easy to speculate on the impact of this phenomenon. However, the authors believe that in the absence of well designed research, and particularly experimental research into this variable, such speculation is premature and inappropriate.

The most disturbing result of this research is the dramatic decline in the positiveness of academic success SC and SE for each of the national groups. Experimental research by Sharp and Muller (1978) suggests that if this decline is the result of frequent exposure to nonsupportive, judgemental presentations of failure information,

academic learning may be seriously reduced. However, if this decline represents exposure to supportive, non-judgemental presentations of failure information, academic performance may not be impaired. Thus, while it is possible that the observed declines in academic success SC and SE represent serious impediments to school learning, it cannot be asserted that such is in fact the case. However, the potential for harm is such that additional research in this area is badly needed.

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Achievement of Students with High and Low Self-Concept

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Achievement of Students with High and Low Self-Concept

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Much speculation has arisen regarding the role of self-concept within the school setting. It is generally held that students equal in ability, but differing in self-concept will differ in their achievement. Specifically, students of equal abilities with a high self-concept will show superior achievement to those with low self-concept. Gose, Wooden and Muller (1980) suggest that the combination of intelligence and self-concept measures account for 3 to 19 percent more of the achievement variance than did intelligence alone. While their results suggest that self-concept may not be as powerful a variable in accounting for differences in achievement levels as is sometimes implied, they do indicate that students with high self-concepts show higher achievement levels than students with low self-concepts. The present study compares the achievement levels of students of equal intellectual abilities but differing self-concepts. In this way the effect of intellectual ability is directly rather than statistically controlled.

Studies by Mintz and Muller (1977), Larned and Muller (1977) and Gose, Wooden, and Muller (1980) indicate that self-concept measures reflective of school success are more closely related to achievement than are either global self-concept measures

or specific self-concept mea[illegible] are reflective of other areas of the child's school experience (e.g., peer relations, physical maturity, or school adaptiveness). Thus, academic success self-concept, rather than other aspects of self-concept, will be the principal independent variable in this study.

While self-concept is more frequently discussed as the variable of principal interest in this context, it is not uncommon for educational theorists to suggest that self-esteem is also a significant factor influencing achievement. Larned and Muller (1977) Muller, Chambliss and Wood (1977) and Gose, Wooden and Muller (1980) quantifying self-esteem as the positiveness of self-valuation, report results that indicate that self-concept is more closely related to achievement than is self-esteem, relevant to physical maturity, peer relations, or school adaptiveness. Thus, this research will examine the achievement levels of individuals matched on intelligence but differing in academic success self-concept and self-esteem.

Method

Subjects and Procedures

A self-concept test, an acheivement battery and an intelligence test were administered to 47 male and 49 female sixth graders drawn from regular, non-ability-grouped public school classrooms. All tests were administered to classroom groups: the self-concept test by the researchers in March, and a group intelligence test and an achievement battery by the classroom teacher in April.

From the pool of 97 students, 13 pairs of individuals were selected so that within each pair IQ's were equal but self-concepts and self-esteems differed. Within each pair, verbal and non-verbal IQ's were within three points of each other, while academic success self-concept and self-esteem for one pair member were two or lower and for the other pair member were each five or higher.

Instruments

Self-Descriptive Inventory

(SDI (1977)). The SDI was used to measure self-concept and self-esteem in four school related areas: physical maturity, peer relations, academic success (general), and school adaptiveness. The SDI consists of 24 illustrations depicting children in both positive and negative roles. Below each illustration is a "happy face" and "sad face." The students are read a brief description of the illustration, and each is asked to indicate on a separate answer sheet the figure that is more like himself and how he feels about being that way. The test yields a self-concept score and a self-esteem score for each of the four factors. The self-concept score indicates the number of times the student selected a figure portraying the more positive role (more mature child, more popular child, more successful child, or more adaptive child). The self-esteem score indicates the number of times the student reported being happy with the way he described himself. Scores on each scale range from zero to 6.

Larned (1978) examined the validity and reliability of the SDI. He reported a factor analytic structure that conformed to the hypothesized structure. Test-retest reliabilities for sixth graders ranged from .85 to .91 for the self-concept scales and .69 to .85 for the self-esteem scales.

Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (1970). The Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills was used to assess achievement. The composite reading, language, and mathematics scores, as well as the total battery score, were utilized.

Short Form Test of Academic Aptitute (SFTAA (1979)). The SFTAA was used to measure both verbal and nonberbal intelligence.

Results

Mean grade equivalent achievement scores in reading, language and arithmetic for the high self-concept/self-esteem and low self-concept students are presented in Table 1. Examination of these data indicates that in each case the means of the high self-concept/self-esteem group were slightly higher than those of the low self-concept/self-esteem group. Mean differences were tested using a matched groups t-test. These analyses revealed no significant differences between the pairs of means.

Thus, this study indicates that students of equal intellectual ability but differing academic success self-concepts/self-esteems are not likely to show greatly different levels of achievement. These results fail to support the notion that self-concept is a

primary and direct factor influencing academic achievement. The present findings are consistent with those of Lane and Muller (1977) and Sharp and Muller (1978).

Table 1

Mean Grade Equivalent Scores of Students with

High and Low Academic Success Self-Concepts/Esteems

		Achievement Measure		
		Reading	Language	Arithmetic
High SC/SE	M	7.65	7.87	8.21
	SD	2.30	1.60	2.04
Low SC/SE	M	7.16	7.62	8.13
	SD	1.75	1.34	2.19

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Relationship Between School Self-Concept and Inappropriate School Behavior

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Relationship Between School Self-Concept and Inappropriate School Behavior

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It is frequently assumed that a student's self-concept is significantly related to his or her behavior in the classroom. If this assumption is correct, then students who are identified as disruptive (exhibiting patterns of maladjusted behavior) would evidence lower self-concepts as learners than those who are identified as nondisruptive students.

In attempts to identify potentially disruptive students, research efforts have isolated dozens of variables which have been shown to be related to disruptive behavior. These variables include socioeconomic status, IQ, race, academic achievement, sex, age, number of siblings, and whether or not parents are divorced (Feldhusen & Coworkers, 1971; Governor's Task Force, 1973; Hagstrom & Gardner, 1969). It is felt that most of the variables related to disruption are either unchangeable (sex, age, race) or beyond the scope of schools (home environment, socioeconomic status, level of parents' education, marital status) and therefore, are of little assistance to educators in reducing student disruption (Damico & Purkey, 1976).

One variable that may be related to student disruption and

may have implications for prescriptive teaching is student self-concept. Purkey and associates have indicated a relationship between academic self-concept and school behavior and have drawn implications for the classroom teacher (Purkey, 1970; Purkey, 1974; Purkey & Avila, 1971; Purkey, Cage, & Graves, 1973).

However, Muller (1978) states that researchers have been unable to demonstrate the value of self-concept either prediction of behavior or the management of student behavior. Nor have researchers been able to demonstrate that induced changes in self-concept are followed by changes in classroom behavior.

Muller, (1978) feels that there is nothing in its essential nature which requires that a relationship between self-concept and other behaviors exist. In addition, he states that there is little emperical support for the existence of a strong, pervasive relationship between self-concept and behavior. Self description may or may not relate to other behaviors.

It is the purpose of this study to determine if a relationship exists between a student's school self-concept and his behavioral adjustment at school.

Method

Subjects and Procedures

The subjects who participated in this study were fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade students at a Title I school in Las Cruces, New Mexico, a city of approximately 50,000. Each class

of students was heterogeneously grouped. Slightly more than half of the subjects were Spanish-surnamed. A total of 233 students (122 females, 111 males) from nine self-contained classrooms were given the Self-Descriptive Inventory (SDI) in the spring of 1978. During this same period of time, each student's regular homeroom teacher rated him/her according to the Behavior Checklist (BCL).

Instruments

Two instruments were used in this study--the Self-Descriptive Inventory (Muller, Larned, & Leonetti, 1977) and the Behavior Checklist (Levine & Muller, 1978).

The SDI was designed to measure self-concept, self-esteem, and self-ideal relevant to four aspects of a child's school life: physical maturity, peer relations, academic success, and school adaptiveness. The format features a series of illustrations depicting children in both positive and negative roles. Below each illustration are a happy face and a sad face, along with the words "happy" and "sad." The student is given a brief oral description of what the illustration is depicting and is asked to circle the figure which is most like himself (self-concept). Next, he is asked to mark the face below the illustration which indicates how he feels about being that way (self-esteem). Last, he is asked to mark the face below the illustration which show he would like to be (self-ideal). There are six illustrations per factor. Three scores--self-concept score, self-esteem score, and self-ideal score--are yielded by the test for each of the four areas tested. The number

of times the student selects a figure portraying the more positive role, i.e., more mature child, more socially accepted child, more academically successful child, or more school-adaptive child, indicates the self-concept score and the self-ideal score. The self-esteem score indicates the number of times the student reports being happy with the way he describes himself.

Validity and reliability data on the SDI have been provided by Donald T. Larned (1978). He concluded that it was high construct validity. The self-concept portion of the test has test-retest reliability coefficients ranging from .85 to .91. The self-esteem portion has test-retest reliability coefficients ranging from .69 to .85. These coefficients were obtained using sixth-grade subjects.

The Behavior Checklist consists of a checklist of student behaviors which teachers typically regard as inappropriate, irrelevant, or nonfunctional within the classroom environment. Some of these behaviors occur quite frequently within the classroom setting, while others are extremely rare. Some of these behaviors are significant in and of themselves, while others are significant only if they form a cluster of behaviors. The checklist was developed to identify children exhibiting identifiable patterns of nonadaptive, nonfunctional, or inappropriate classroom behavior. The instrument is a research tool, and its validity as a diagnostic classification or testing device has not been established.

The Behavior Checklist scales identify the following behaviors: total number of behaviors occurring in the last 2 weeks; total number

of behaviors occurring; destructive behaviors; physical aggressiveness; nervous mannerisms; disruptive annoyances; verbal aggressiveness; cheating, lying, stealing; classroom avoidance; negative peer relations; self-destructiveness; and inappropriate sexual or eliminative behaviors.

Results & Discussion

Multiple correlation analyses of the data indicated no significant relationships between the combinations of the 16 SDI measures and each of the 12 scales of the BCL. These coefficients are presented in Table 1. The indication was that, when the SDI factors were considered in combination, or globally, no statistically significant relationships with behavior appeared. Single correlations between measures of the SDI and measures of the BCL indicated that there were some statistically significant, but weak, negative relationships between self-concept and inappropriate behavior in the classroom.

It appears that the relationship between self-concept and inappropriate behavior in the classroom is factor-specific with that area of self-concept most reflective of school adaptiveness being most often related to behavior. Muller, Chambliss, and Wood (1977) also found the relationship between self-concept and achievement to be factor-specific, with that area of self-concept most reflective of academic success being most directly related to measured academic achievement. Similar findings were observed by Chambliss, Muller, Hulnick, and Wood (1978), Gose, Wooden and Muller (1978), and Lane and Muller (1977).

Thus, these results do support the notion of a relationship between self-concept and classroom behavior but indicate that the relationship is weak. While these results cannot be taken as evidence that altering self-concept will affect classroom behavior, they do suggest that if such an effect would occur it's impact would be minimal.

Table 1

Single Correlations of the Self-Descriptive Inventory with the Behavior Checklist and Multiple Correlations of the Self-Descriptive Inventory with the Behavior Checklist

Dependent Variable BCL	Single Correlations of SDI with BCL																Multiple Correlations of SDI with BCL Scale
	Physical Maturity Self-Concept 1	Physical Maturity Self-Esteem 2	Physical Maturity Self-Ideal 3	Physical Maturity Congruence 4	Peer Relations Self-Concept 5	Peer Relations Self-Esteem 6	Peer Relations Self-Ideal 7	Peer Relations Congruence 8	Academic Success Self-Concept 9	Academic Success Self-Esteem 10	Academic Success Self-Ideal 11	Academic Success Congruence 12	School Adaptiveness Self-Concept 13	School Adaptiveness Self-Esteem 14	School Adaptiveness Self-Ideal 15	School Adaptiveness Congruence 16	
Total number of behaviors occurring in last 2 weeks 17	.00	.02	.02	-.07	-.10	-.05	.01	-.12	-.07	-.09	-.01	-.08	-.10	-.19*	.09	-.20*	.31
Total number of behaviors occurring 18	.08	.04	.04	-.01	-.12	-.04	-.09	-.08	-.04	-.00	-.15*	.01	-.18*	-.12	-.04	-.16*	.32
Destructive behaviors 19	.02	.04	.08	-.08	-.13*	-.07	-.02	-.13*	-.01	-.03	.09	-.05	-.04	-.06	.10	-.10	.26
Physical aggressiveness 20	.06	.04	.07	-.14*	-.08	-.05	.04	-.18*	.02	-.01	.08	-.04	.08	.06	.13*	-.00	.32
Nervous mannerisms 21	.02	.03	.05	-.10	-.17*	-.13*	.05	-.20*	-.02	-.04	.05	-.08	.02	-.03	.09	-.10	.30
Disruptive behaviors 22	-.02	.00	-.00	-.06	-.04	.06	-.00	-.01	-.05	-.05	-.00	-.04	-.13*	-.22*	.10	-.20*	.34
Verbal aggressiveness 23	.02	.11	-.01	.05	.04	.07	.03	-.00	.08	.04	.03	.05	.03	.03	.07	.01	.20
Cheating, lying, stealing 24	.01	.07	.01	-.03	-.04	-.01	-.08	-.10	.01	.06	-.07	.05	.08	.01	.02	.01	.29
Classroom avoidance 25	.04	-.01	-.07	-.01	-.02	-.06	-.03	-.02	-.06	-.07	-.06	-.06	-.16*	-.20*	-.02	-.20*	.27
Negative peer relations 26	-.04	-.05	.03	-.09	-.14*	-.12	.08	-.18*	-.06	-.11	.04	-.10	.06	-.05	.06	-.06	.28
Self-destructiveness 27	-.05	.10	.00	.06	-.11	-.07	.02	-.10	-.07	.02	-.17*	.03	-.14*	.10	-.22*	.01	.35
Inappropriate sexual or oppositional behaviors 28	-.07	-.04	.11	-.13*	-.14*	-.07	.03	-.14*	-.13*	-.18*	.07	-.15*	.11	-.16*	.05	-.17*	.32

*Significant at the $p \leq .05$ level.

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SELF-CONCEPTS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

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Muller (1978) suggests that self-concept can be usefully conceptualized as self-descriptive behavior. As such, he argues that it is largely a cognitive, verbal skill. It would appear that such a skill would be affected by impaired cognitive functioning. This study attempts to examine the self-concept of cognitively impaired students. Specifically, it will look at the self-descriptive behaviors of children placed in special education programs.

Role of Self-Concept in School Performance

A commonly accepted notion is that negative self-concept may affect a child's classroom behavior.

Sharp and Muller (1978) demonstrated that, when self-concept was lowered in a judgmental, nonsupportive manner, subsequent learning was affected. However, when self-concept was lowered in an accepting, supportive manner, learning was not affected. In these studies, it appears that the relationship between self-concept and achievement may be more a matter of how self-concept is altered, rather than the self-concept itself, which is important.

Larned and Muller (1979) observed that academic self-concept of students declined drastically across grades. They are careful to point out that they did not demonstrate that this observed decline negatively affected learning. The research of Sharp and Muller (1978) indicated, however, that this decline holds the potential for having a deleterious effect on learning.

If the school experience is of such a nature that it produces a dramatic decline in self-concept for normal children, one cannot help but wonder about its effect on the self-concept of the child with learning difficulties.

Self-Concept and Special Education

It is not uncommon to hear special education teachers report that the self-concept of many of their students appear to be negative or low (Lawrence & Winchell, 1978). However, this has not been adequately documented.

Effect of Placement in Special Education Classes

A review of the literature concerning the self-concepts of cognitively impaired or exceptional children reveals a paucity of systematically collected data.

Howe and Snider (1969) found that EMR students with an average IQ of 71 and average age 14 years, 9 months, consistently overrated their abilities. The data suggest that with younger and duller students the overrating was greater. Ringness (1961) compared the self-concepts of children of low, average, and high intelligence and found that children of low intelligence over-estimated their success.

Lewis (1973) examined self-concept, academic achievement, attitude toward school and adaptive behavior of educable mentally handicaped children who were enrolled in one of the following school settings: (a) regular classrooms while on a waiting list for placement; (b) non-integrated placement; (c) integrated placement; or (d) a resource room placement. Of the four school placements, integrated and non-integrated classrooms produced the highest self-concept among EMH children. Aspects of this study and others (Lawrence & Winchell, 1973) are relevant to the current debate in education regarding the segregated placement of children and lead to the conclusion that the existence of the "self-concept of the retarded" as a unique and generalizable construct is questionable.

In addition to TMR and EMH children, many other types of handicapping conditions exist and are recognized as exceptional by special educators. Four frequently used classifications for diagnosis of handicapping conditions are behaviorally disordered (BD); communicative disordered (CD); learning disabled (LD); and educable mentally handicapped (EMH). As with TMR and EMH classifications, little is known about the self-concept of BD, CD and LD students. It is clear that a paucity of empirical research concerning exceptional children exists. This research will attempt to provide information in this area by examining the positiveness of self-concept of students from each of the four diagnostic categories.

Larned and Muller report that self-concept and self-esteem follow different development in different areas. This study will examine the developmental patterns of self-concept in the four areas described by Larned and Muller and concerning a special education population.

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

The Self-Descriptive Inventory (Muller, Larned and Leonetti, 1977) was administered to 91 male and 52 female students from special education classrooms in elementary schools in the Las Cruces and Hatch, New Mexico, area. All students were classified as having "C" level disabilities. Children with "C" level disabilities were children with moderate special education needs who could benefit from placement in a specialized program.

Students included in this study were based in self-contained classrooms at least half a day. Only subjects multiply or singularly diagnosed as Behaviorally Disordered (BD), Communication Disordered (CD), Educable Mentally Handicapped (EMH), and Learning Disabled (LD) were utilized. For this study, handicapping conditions were defined in accordance with New Mexico's Special Education Guidelines. Not included in this study were children with a primary handicap of Hearing Impaired (HI), Physically Imparied (PI), Trainable Mentally Retarded (TMR), or Visually Impaired (VI). New Mexico also recognizes Giftedness as an exceptionality; these children were excluded as well. The BD and EMH children were grouped separately in their "home" classrooms, while CD and LD students were grouped together. Ages ranged from 78 to 166 months.

Instruments

The Self-Descriptive Inventory (SDI) is a group test designed to measure the child's self-concept, self-esteem, self-ideal, and congruence relevant to four specific areas of his school life: physical maturity, peer relations, academic success, and school adaptiveness.

Procedures

The Self-Descriptive Inventory (Muller, Larned, and Leonetti, 1977) was administered by trained and state-certified school counselors and educational diagnosticians to classroom groups of students. Intelligence tests and other data had previously been obtained by the same personnel and were available through the public schools with legal release and consent.

Analysis of self-measures were accomplished though a factorial design. The independent variables were age (78 to 120 months and 121 to 166 months) and primary exceptionality (BD, CD, LD, and EMH).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mean self-concept, self-esteem, self-ideal and congruence scores by age (young and old) and exceptionality are presented in Table 1. Each of the sixteen measures was subjected to an age by handicapping condition analysis of variance. The results of these analysis are also summarized in Table 1. A Newman-Keuls analysis was then used to test mean differences.

Physical maturity. Inspection of physical maturity self-concept means suggests that the differences between groups are smaller for older children than for younger. The analysis of variance revealed a significant age main effect, exceptionality main effect and age by exceptionality interaction. The Newman-Keuls analysis indicated that for the young children, the LD group mean was significantly lower than those of the other exceptionality groups. No significant mean differences were found among the exceptionality groups for older children. The Newman-Keuls analysis also revealed that the LD-young mean was lower than the LD-old mean.

Analysis of the physical maturity self-esteem means revealed no significant main effects of interaction. The analysis of the physical maturity self-ideal results indicated a significant exceptionality main effect and age by exceptionality interaction. The Newman-Keuls analysis revealed that the LD-young group mean was significantly lower than the BD-young mean.

Across age, LD-young revealed significantly lower scores than LD-old. Analysis of physical maturity congruence data indicated no significant mean differences.

Larned and Muller (1979) reported relatively stable physical maturity self-concept and self-esteem across age. The results of the present study tend to parallel those of Larned and Muller with the exception of self-concept for the LD group. In general the mean self-concepts were as would be expected in a group of students who were describing themselves with some degree of accuracy. That self-esteem is relatively high, self-ideal is somewhat more positive than self-concept and that congruence is relatively high suggests good adjustment in the physical maturity area. The very low self-concept and self-ideal of the young LD children is interesting. However, the high self-esteem of this group suggests that there is no great need for alarm. None the less, this phenomenon is certainly worthy of further examination.

Peer relations. Examination means reveals relatively stable mean self-concept across age for each of the exceptionality condition except CD. Older CD children displayed greater positiveness of self-concept than younger CD children. The analysis of variance revealed a significant age by exceptionality

AGE BY DISABILITY

TABLE I

Mean Self-Concept, Self-Esteem, Self-Ideal and Congruence Scores

Self-Measure	Young				Old						
	BD	CD	LD	EMH	BD	CD	LD	EMH	A Handicapping (H) Conditions	B Age (A)	HxA
Physical Maturity											
concept	2.83	4.00	1.00	2.53	3.15	3.33	3.59	4.10		6.5856	3.6719
esteem	4.46	5.30	5.36	5.07	5.46	5.42	5.24	4.72			
ideal	4.50	3.80	2.00	2.60	3.23	4.13	4.00	3.21	2.7627		3.9829
congruence	3.67	5.20	4.64	3.67	3.62	4.13	4.41	3.52			
Peer Relations											
concept	3.00	2.30	3.18	3.53	2.77	4.42	3.41	3.31			2.8635
esteem	3.88	4.00	4.73	4.67	5.08	5.42	4.76	4.41			
ideal	3.88	2.80	3.82	3.33	3.69	4.88	4.47	3.90		6.4178	
congruence	4.13	4.50	4.45	3.40	4.00	4.71	4.35	4.03			
Academic Success											
concept	4.00	4.10	3.09	4.07	3.38	4.29	2.71	4.03	3.6969		
esteem	4.46	4.40	4.73	4.47	4.85	5.63	4.35	4.45			
ideal	5.04	4.60	3.73	3.33	4.31	4.63	4.59	4.41			2.7751
congruence	4.04	5.10	4.09	3.67	3.54	4.67	4.00	4.38			
School Adaptiveness											
concept	5.08	4.70	5.36	4.80	3.62	5.08	4.59	5.28			2.9374
esteem	4.92	5.20	5.55	4.80	4.46	5.42	5.41	5.00			
ideal	4.96	4.90	5.09	4.13	4.54	5.42	5.53	5.03			
congruence	4.48	5.80	5.36	4.13	3.08	5.17	4.94	5.03			3.2237
	Numbers of Subjects								Degrees of Freedom		
	24	10	11	15	13	24	17	29	3/135	1/135	3/135

interaction indicating that there are differences among the developmental patterns of the four diagnostic groups. The Newman-Keuls analysis confirms this with the CD children showing a significant rise in the positiveness of peer relations self-concept and the other diagnostic groups showing no developmental changes.

The analysis of the peer relations self-esteem data revealed no significant mean differences.

There appears to be a dramatic increase in peer relations self-ideal for CD children, a moderate increase for LD and EMH, and a similar decline for BD children by age. The analysis of variance revealed only a significant age main effect. The Newman-Keuls analysis indicated that only the difference between the means of CD young and old was signficant. The peer relations congruence data yielded no significant mean differences.

Larned and Muller (1979) reported relatively stable peer relations self-concept and self-esteem across age. The results of the present study are largely consistent with those findings. The major exception occurs with self-concept for CD children. It is possible that for this group of youngsters communication difficulties may make extensive social interaction difficult at the younger ages. That self-esteem is not correspondingly depressed suggests that the low self-concept is not a serious problem. As in the physical maturity area, the moderately positive mean self-concept suggests that as a group self-concepts are somewhat realistic. This combined with the positive self-esteem, the tendency for self-ideal to be slightly more positive than self-concept and the high congruence suggests good adjustment in the peer relations area.

Academic success. The analysis of variance applied to academic success self-concept results indicated a significant exceptionality main effect. The Newman-Keuls analysis revealed that the mean of LD old students was lower than that of all other groups.

The analysis of variance failed to reveal a significant difference between the means of the younger and older students in academic success self-esteem or within any of the exceptionality groups. Academic success self-ideal showed a significant age by exceptionality interaction. The subsequent Newman-Keuls analysis revealed only a significant mean difference between BD young children and EMH young. The analysis of the academic success congruence data revealed no significant mean differences.

In the area of academic success, Larned and Muller (1979) found dramatic declines in the mean positiveness of self-concept and self-esteem across age. Except for the LD children, none of

groups in this study displayed such a pattern. In general, academic success self-concept and self-esteem in the present study were quite positive. The tendency for self-concept to be positive raises questions about the accuracy of self-concepts in some of the children in the groups. Specifically, it is probably important for children with learning difficulties to recognize the existence of those difficulties. This is certainly an area in need of much more empirical investigation. The declining self-concept of the LD children suggests that for this group.

School adaptiveness. The analysis of variance for school adaptiveness self-concept revealed a significant age by exceptionality interaction. The Newman-Keuls analysis indicated that the EMH old students expressed more positive school adaptiveness self-concept than did the BD old students. Analysis of the school adaptivenss self-esteem and self-ideal revealed no significant mean differences. The analysis of variance applied to school adaptiveness congruence revealed a significant exceptionality main effect and age by exceptionality interaction. Mean differences were found between LBD old children and CD old, LD old and EMH old. The mean of the BD old was also significantly lower than that of BD young. Thus it appears that school adaptiveness congruence declines with age for BD children but remains relatively stable for other exceptionalities.

As with academic success, Larned and Muller (1979) observed declining patterns in the postivenss of self-concept and self-esteem. Similar effects were not observed in the present study. The fact that BD children described themselves with the same degree of positiveness as the other groups again raises questions about the accuracy of self-concept in this area. Aside from this issue, there was nothing in the data to suggest poor adjustment in the school adaptiveness area.

Overall, the results of this research suggest fairly positive self-concept and self-esteem for special education students. There was nothing in the results which would provide a basis for serious apprehension. The data in the area of academic success and school adaptiveness suggested that accuracy of self-concept may be low for certain groups. Certainly, low accuracy of self-concept is a matter of concern for the special educator, but Muller (1978) concludes that low accuracy of self-concept is a characteristic of children in regular classrooms as well.

However, it is not appropriate on the basis of these results, that the special educator does not need to be concerned with these self-concepts of students. Perhaps the most critical aspects of self-concept were not addressed in this research. Those aspects are accuracy of self-concept and the extent to which self-concept is used to solve life-problems. Research in these areas is badly needed.

In summary, the results of this research suggest that BD, LD, CD and EMH students do not have profoundly depressed self-concept or self-esteems, that developmental patterns for these children appear to differ from those of normal children and that the accuracy of self-concept in certain cases might be low.

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STABILITY OF SELF-CONCEPT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN SIXTH GRADERS

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It is typically assumed that self-concept is a relatively stable characteristic of the individual but recent experimental evidence suggests that academic self-concept can rather easily be changed through teacher intervention (Lane and Muller, 1977; Sharp and Muller, 1978) and that under certain conditions, these changes can adversely affect learning (Sharp and Muller, 1978). However, fluctuations of self-concept in the absence of planned instructional or experimental interventions has not been explored.

Certainly self-concept should change to reflect changing characteristics of the individual. The student whose academic performance improves should have that improvement reflected in his academic self-concept. However, for self-concept to fluctuate dramatically over a relatively short period of time would not be desirable in that such fluctuations would typically not represent corresponding changes in the individual's actual characteristics. The study reported here examines the stability of four school related areas of self-concept over a relatively short period of time and in the absence of planned instructional interventions designed to alter self-concept.

A difficulty in assessing the stability of self-concept is that instruments for measuring self-concept have less than perfect reliability and thus introduce variability in successive measures. However, if self-concept is stable, it would be expected that for most individuals successive measures would fluctuate within certain limits about the unchanging, underlying concept. Thus, within a group of individuals, the

correlation between successive measures should be relatively independent of the length of time between the two measures. On the other hand, if for a sizable percentage of students, self-concept is somewhat unstable, the correlation between successive measures should systematically decrease as the length of time between measures increases.

If self-concept does fluctuate, several questions arise. First, within the individual, does self-concept in each of several areas fluctuate in unison or are the fluctuations within different areas independent of each other. A related question is whether stability of self-concept within one area is related to stability in another area. Put another way, is stability of self-concept an area specific characteristic of the individual or is it a global phenomenon. That self-concept can be organized into statistically independent factors (Piers and Harris, 1964; Muller and Leonetti, 1974; and Larned, 1978); that the various areas of self-concept follow different developmental patterns (Larned and Muller, 1979); and that instructional intervention may affect one area of self-concept without affecting others, suggests that the stability of self-concept would also be area specific. This study attempts to test this conclusion.

If the self-concepts of students do fluctuate, individual differences in degree of stability would be expected. Degree of stability may be a characteristic of the student's self-concept which is systematically related to other aspects of his behavior. The present study attempts to determine if stability in measured self-concept is related to school achievement.

Thus, this study attempts to provide information relative to three issues. First, does self-concept in school children remain stable or does it fluctuate within relatively short periods of time? Secondly, is degree of stability within the individual a global or area specific phenomenon? Finally, is degree of stability in self-concept related to academic achievement?

METHOD

The Self-Descriptive Inventory (Muller, Larned, & Leonetti, 1978) was administered to four classrooms of sixth graders at two week intervals for six testings. Testing was conducted by the researchers during the months of January, February, and March. For each classroom, successive tests were administered by the same researcher on the same day of the week and at the same time of day. Classroom teachers were not present during testing.

After the first testing, students were told that the researchers wished to determine if their ideas of how they are doing in school had changed or stayed the same and that it was very important that each person should answer according to what he/she thought now.

Academic achievement in reading, language, and arithmetic was measured in April with the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills. This test was administered to the classroom groups by the teacher.

Subjects were 46 boys and 64 girls of normal intellectual ability in regular sixth grade classrooms. Of the 110 students in the total sample, 14 boys and 23 girls were identified as having taken the SDI on five or more successive administrations. Only the scores for a student's

first five testings were used. For those students who took the SDI six times, the scores on the last testing were discarded. Of these 37 students, 3 did not take the CTBS. Thus, five successive sets of SDI scores and CTBS scores were available for 12 boys and 22 girls.

An Index of stability (SI) of self-concept within the indivdual was calculated as the standard deviation of the five successive test scores on each of the four self-concept and four self-esteem scales of the SDI. Thus, for each individual, a SI for each of the eight self-measures was calculated.

The SDI consists of a series of 24 illustrations depicting children in both positive and negative roles. Below each illustration is a "happy face" and a "sad face." The students are read a brief description of the illustration and each is asked to indicate on a separate answer sheet the figure which is most like himself and then how he feels about being that way. The test yields a self-concept and a self-esteem score for each of the four factors. The self-concept score indicates the number of times the student selected a figure portraying the more postive role (more mature child, more popular child, more successful child, or more adaptive child). The self-esteem score indicates the number of times the student reported being happy with the way he described himself. Scores on each scale range from zero to six.

Larned (1978) examined the validity and reliability of the SDI. He reported a factor analytic structure which conformed to the hypothesized structure. Test-retest reliabilities for sixth graders ranged from .85

to .91 for the self-concept scales and .69 to .85 for the self-esteem scales. Muller, Larned and Leonetti, in an unpublished study, found reliabilities of the 1978 form of the SDI ranged from .93 to .86 for self-concept and .90 to .78 for self-esteem.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Stability of self-concept and self-esteem within each student was measured as the standard deviation of scores on the successive testings. Mean SIs are presented in Table 1. Inspection indicates that stability of successive measures was approximately the same on each of the eight scales.

If self-concept remains stable over relatively short periods of time, the test-retest correlations should be unrelated to the length of time between test and retest. Table 2 presents the test-retest correlations between the first testing and second, third, fourth, and fifth testings. Inspection of these values reveals that the test-retest correlations decreased as time between successive measures increased. For physical maturity self-concept and self-esteem, peer relations self-concept and self-esteem and academic success self-esteem, the correlation between the first and second testings was significantly higher than that between the first and fifth testings. Thus, for these scales it appears that scores fluctuated more than would have been attributed to error of measurement. For academic success self-concept and self-esteem, and school adaptiveness self-concept, there was a decrease in the test-retest correlation as a function of time between testings, but that decrease was not statistically significant.

TABLE 1

Mean Stability Index (SI) for

Each of the Eight Self-Measures

	physical maturity	peer relations	academic success	school adaptiveness
self-concept	0.71	0.58	0.69	0.67
self-esteem	0.62	0.74	0.73	0.76

TABLE 2

Correlations Between First

Testing Scores and Second, Third,

Fourth and Fifth Testing Scores

	Testings 2	3	4	5	t-ratio*	test-retest reliability
Physical Maturity						
self-concept	.73	.66	.57	.57	1.75**	.93
self-esteem	.75	.75	.52	.50	2.45**	.87
Peer Relations						
self-concept	.82	.54	.67	.54	3.17**	.87
self-esteem	.76	.52	.49	.49	2.90**	.89
Academic Success						
self-concept	.82	.75	.75	.73	1.40	.86
self-esteem	.81	.74	.80	.79	0.35	.90
School Adaptiveness						
self-concept	.77	.71	.75	.71	0.96	.91
self-esteem	.57	.45	.29	.37	2.35**	.78

*t-test of difference between correlation coefficients $r_{\text{first test·second test}}$ and $r_{\text{first test·fifth test}}$

** $p < .05$

That for academic success self-concept and self-esteem and school adaptiveness self-concept, (1) the mean of the intra-student standard deviations of successive measures (Table 1) were not appreciably different from those of the other self-measures, (2) the test-retest reliabilities (Muller, Larned and Leonetti, 1980) were not appreciably different than those for the other self-measures and (3) the correlations between testings is somewhat constant regardless of whether the interval is two weeks or eight weeks, suggests that these self-measures may have fluctuated about a central value and that the period of fluctuation may have been less than two weeks. That is, for the children in this sample, academic success self-concept and self-esteem and school adaptiveness self-concept may have fluctuated as much as the other self-measures but these fluctuations had a shorter than average period. Certainly, this is an issue worthy of further investigation.

The correlations between the intra-student standard deviations of successive measures on each of the eight scales are presented in Table 3. These results indicate that the stability of physical maturity self-concept was unrelated to stability of the other measures; stability of physical maturity self-esteem was related only to stability of academic success self-concept ($r = .53$); stability of peer relations self-concept was related only to stability of peer relations self esteem ($r = .89$); stability of academic success self-concept was related only to stability of academic success self-esteem ($r = .51$) and as previously mentioned, stability of physical maturity self-esteem; stability of academic success self-esteem was related not only to stability of academic success self-

concept but also to the stabilities of school adaptiveness self-concept (r - .37) and self-esteem (r = .38; the stability of school adaptiveness was also related to the stability of school adaptiveness self-esteem (r = .57). The relatively few significant correlations in Table 3 suggests that stability of self-concept or self-esteem in one area very frequently is not related to the degree of stability in other areas. This lends support to the area specific conceptualization of self-concept.

The correlations between the intra-student standard deviations of successive self-measures and achievement are presented in Table 4. Inspection of these data reveals that the standard deviation of successive measures of physical maturity self-esteem, academic success self-concept and academic success self-esteem were negatively correlated with reading achievement. No other significant relationships between stability and achievement were detected. Thus, as the standard deviation of successive measures increased (stability decreased), reading achievement tended to decrease. That stability of academic success self-concept and self-esteem correlated with reading achievement but stability of other measures tended not to, parallel earlier findings that positiveness of academic success self-concept and self-esteem were correlated with reading achievement (Gose, Wooden, and Muller, 1980). This finding is consistent with an area specific conceptualization of self-concept. Interestingly, the finding in the present study of a relationship between stability of physical maturity self-esteem and reading achievement parallells the earlier finding of a relationship between the positiveness of physical maturity self-esteem

TABLE 3

Correlations Between Stability Indexes

	Physical Maturity		Peer Relations		Academic Success		School Adaptiveness	
	self-concept	self-esteem	self-concept	self-esteem	self-concept	self-esteem	self-concept	self-esteem
Physical Maturity								
self-concept	1.00	.09	.28	.25	-.02	-.07	-.12	.06
self-esteem		1.00	.27	.29	.53*	.26	.09	.19
Peer Relations								
self-concept			1.00	.89*	.27	.27	.04	.00
self-esteem				1.00	.12	.22	.10	.00
Academic Success								
self-concept					1.00	.51*	-.02	.25
self-esteem						1.00	.37*	.38*
School Adaptiveness								
self-concept							1.00	.57*
self-esteem								1.00

* $p < .05$

TABLE 4

Correlations Between The

Stability Indexes and

Achievement Measures

	Achievement Measures		
	Reading	Language	Arithmetic
Physical Maturity			
self-concept	.06	.00	.24
self-esteem	-.38*	-.13	.13
Peer Relations			
self-concept	.09	.32	.06
self-esteem	-.02	.10	.16
Academic Success			
self-concept	-.37*	.02	.00
self-esteem	-.34*	-.09	-.11
School Adaptiveness			
self-concept	.05	.13	-.09
self-esteem	.21	-.30	.03

*$p < .05$

and reading achievement (Gose, Wooden, and Muller, 1980). This phenomenon may warrant further investigation.

Thus, the results of this study suggest that self-concept and self-esteem do fluctuate over time, that individuals do differ in their degrees of self-concept stability, that the degree of stability of self-concept within the indivudal tends to be an area specific rather than global characteristic and that reading achievement is related to stability of academic success self-concept and self-esteem.

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